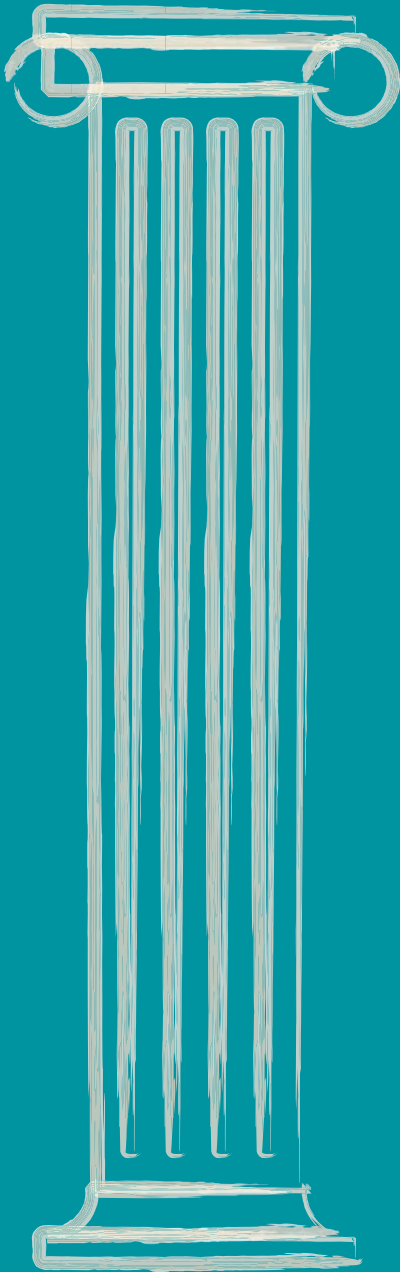




THE FORUM



VIRGINIA'S LABOR MARKET &
OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION
NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Number 2 Summer 2006



What Grads Should Know About Job-hunting

Class of 2006 can expect better prospects, higher pay

The class of 2006 is looking at a bright future with promising job prospects and salary increases.

Seventy percent of hiring managers say they plan to recruit recent college graduates this year, up from 62 percent in 2005, according to CareerBuilder.com's "College Hiring 2006" survey. Plus, nearly one-in-five hiring managers expect to hire more recent college graduates in 2006 compared to last year, and one in four plan to increase starting salaries.

College grads can also expect a bigger payoff this year. Twenty-seven percent of hiring managers anticipate increasing starting salaries for recent college graduates in 2006, and only 5 percent plan to decrease them.

How much should new grads expect to earn? Thirty-four percent of hiring managers expect to offer between \$20,000 and \$30,000, and 28 percent expect to offer between \$30,000 and \$40,000. An additional 10 percent will offer between \$40,000 and \$50,000, and 7 percent will offer more than \$50,000.

New grads won't have to pound the pavement for too long. Thirty-six percent of hiring managers say they will do the majority of their hiring of recent college graduates in the second quarter. Thirty-one percent say the majority of their hiring will take place in the third quarter.

With promising job opportunities, favorable salaries and plenty of free time, new grads should have no reason not to look for that first job. Make sure you know these top five things hiring managers look for when sizing up a candidate:

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Relevant experience

Twenty-three percent of hiring managers say the candidate's ability to relate their experience to the job at hand is the most important factor in the hiring decision. Unfortunately, new graduates often underestimate the experience they have through internships, part-time jobs, and extracurricular activities, but 63 percent of hiring managers say they view volunteer activities as relevant experience.

Fit within the company culture

Just because you look good on paper doesn't mean you're a shoo-in for the job. To 21 percent of employers, the trait they most want to see in a candidate is the ability to fit in with co-workers and the company. Offering up a blank stare when the interviewer asks why you are the right fit for the job will not go over well. Just be yourself, but mind your i's—never insult, interrupt, or irritate the interviewer. This can also be evaluated by that "unimportant" small talk at the beginning of an interview or non-job-related questions like "What was the last book you read?"

Educational background

Nineteen percent of hiring managers place the most emphasis on your educational background: the institution you attended, major, minor, and degree earned. Be sure to also include courses taken and completed projects if relevant to the job. With grade point average, it's tricky. A good rule of thumb is to omit it unless it is 3.0 or higher and denote if it's your overall or major GPA.

Enthusiasm

Passion for the job is the top characteristic 19 percent of employers look for in a candidate. Employees who are passionate about their jobs tend to be more productive workers. The answer to "Why do you want to work here?" should always focus on the strengths of the company and the challenge of the position, not the perks. A "take-or-leave-it" attitude about the job will leave the employer feeling the same about you.

Preparedness

Eight percent of hiring managers say the ideas you bring to the table and the questions you ask carry the most significance. Come in prepared to discuss how your qualifications can specifically contribute to the success of the company. Actually put yourself in that role and explain how you would perform your work and ways to improve it.

Source: Brent Rasmussen, CareerBuilder.com

"A man who qualifies himself well for his calling, never fails of employment."

—Thomas Jefferson

RESUME

Job

OBJECTIVE:

Obtain

EDUCATION:

Bach

Cert

EXPERIENCE:

Interview Planner

- Purchase correspondence paper stock (stationery and matching envelopes).
- Keep enough paper stock on hand to print your résumés, cover letters, and other correspondence on matching stationery and envelopes.
- Know the standards for writing cover letters, thank you letters, and when to phone.
- Keep stamps on hand at all times!
- Keep track of all career-related written and verbal correspondence.
- Identify your basic interview wardrobe: select one or two outfits or suits that are considered fairly conservative for your field.
- Locate your local overnight or one-hour dry cleaner.
- Polish your business shoes.
- Always have extra, clean copies of your résumé with you.
- Keep on file an interview folder to bring with you on interviews.
It should contain: a few résumés in a plastic sleeve, some reminders for yourself about your skills and your goals, and a pen and some paper to make notes before and after the interview.
- Bring to the interview: your interview folder, the names of the people you are meeting, and the address with directions. You may also want: a comb, tissues, and breath mints.
- Know where you're going in advance.
- Leave yourself plenty of time to get there.
- You want to arrive a little bit early, not just on time and never late.
- Follow up with thank-you letters immediately.
- Make sure you can be reached, whether by phone, fax, or email.

Source: Monster.com

High-paying occupations with many job openings, projected 2004-14



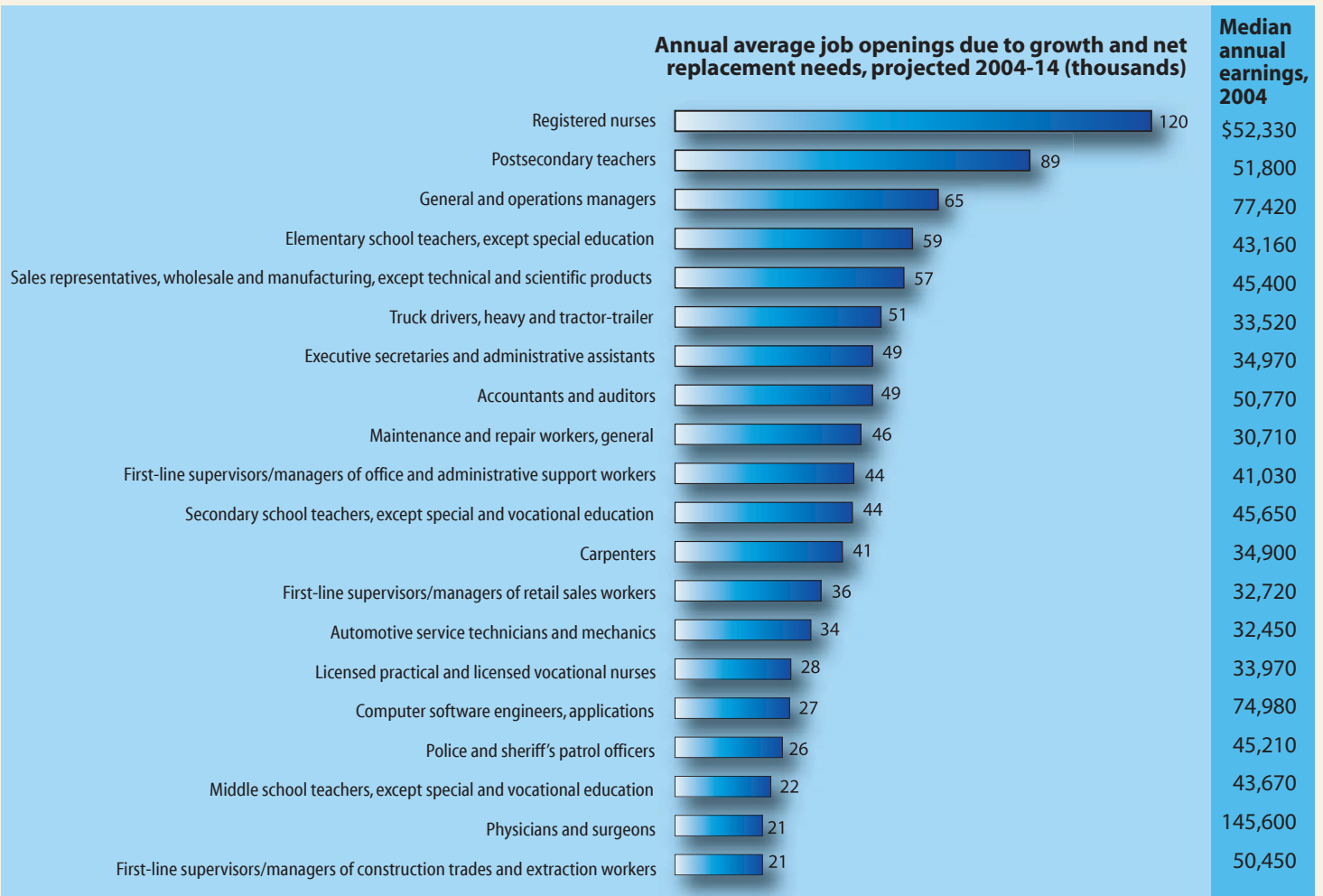
Over the 2004-14 decade, career choices abound for those seeking jobs that have high earnings and many opportunities.

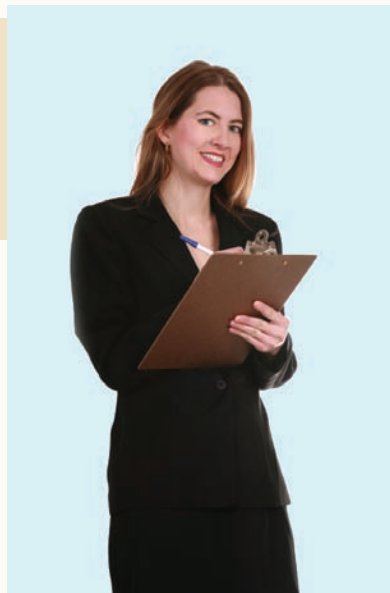
The chart shows occupations that ranked in the top two earnings quartiles for 2004 median earnings. This means that 2004 median earnings in these occupations were higher than those of at least half of all workers.

The job openings in the chart represent openings available to people who are entering the occupation for the first time. Some of these openings are positions that need to be filled because workers have left an occupation permanently for any reason—changing to another occupation, retiring, or returning to school, for example. Other openings are new positions created because of growth in the occupation.

These job openings do not include every opening that exists. Because the chart is measuring opportunities for workers who want to enter the occupation, for example, job openings are not included if they will be filled by workers already in that occupation.

Source: Occupational Outlook Quarterly Online





Temporary work: Short-term jobs with long-term potential

Are you looking to pick up a little extra cash during the school year? Do you need to enhance your résumé and pay the bills while searching for a full-time job? Is flexibility a priority? A stint with a temporary services firm might just be up your employment alley.

By definition, temporary jobs are of limited duration. But they can be useful tools in building a career. For example, temporary jobs might provide you with much-needed experience in your chosen field.

And temporary positions sometimes lead to permanent ones.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), temporary help services firms provided about 2.5 million wage-and-salary jobs in 2005. And the industry is projected to grow quickly over the next decade.

Businesses are not only using more temporary help, they are also relying on temp workers to fill a wider variety of positions. Traditionally, temporary jobs have been in office and administrative support, production, and transportation and material moving occupations—and there are still many jobs in these fields. But today, an increasing number of jobs are in occupations, such as computer programmers, lawyers, or registered nurses, which require higher education and command greater pay.

To learn more about the employment services industry, see its profile in the *Career Guide to Industries* online at www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs039.htm; write the BLS Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, 2 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Room 2135, Washington, D.C. 20212-0001; or call (202) 691-5700.



Source: www.bls.gov; *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*

Career myths and how to debunk them

You might think you know, but you could be wrong. Don't be a victim of your own misconceptions. Here's how to uncover the truth about careers.

Most people make assumptions about careers. Often, these assumptions are based on impressions they get from their relatives and friends, from television drama and reality shows, and from workers and jobs that they see in their daily lives.

Impressions are a good place to start because they help people identify possible careers. But they show only a small portion of reality, or worse: No reality at all. That's when career impressions become career myths.

Some myths are easily dismissed; others interfere with your ability to develop career goals. Expand your career options and uncover the truth about each career. Reality tools—including statistics, expert advice, and real-world experiences—can supply the facts. The complete article may be accessed at www.bls.gov/opus/ooq/2005/fall/art01.pdf.

Source: Olivia Crosby, Managing Editor of Occupational Outlook Quarterly



Earnings of workers in occupations with the largest number of employees

(Average hourly earnings, occupations with employment of over 2 million, May 2005)

	Employment	Mean hourly wages
Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	2,298,010	\$7.48
Waiters and waitresses	2,274,770	\$7.48
Cashiers	3,481,420	\$8.32
Janitors and cleaners except maids and housekeeping cleaners	2,107,360	\$10.15
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	2,363,960	\$10.80
Retail salespersons	4,344,770	\$11.14
General office clerks	2,997,370	\$11.82
Customer service representatives	2,067,700	\$14.27
Registered nurses	2,368,070	\$27.35

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics Program

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It's on the Way...

The new edition of the *Virginia Business Resource Directory* will soon be available. The publication will be available in hard copy and CD-ROM. You may order copies using the order form on this page, or online at www.vec.virginia.gov/vecportal/lbrmkt/basket/store.cfm; or you may call (804) 786-8223 for more details.

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Don Lillywhite, Director
Economic Information Services
Virginia Employment Commission
P.O. Box 1358
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Also on
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_____ *Interview Tips*—18" × 24"

_____ *One-page information sheets*—camera-ready version to print multiple copies. Check desired information sheet.

_____ *Eight Keys to Employability*

_____ *Fastest-Growing Occupations, U.S. Data*

_____ *Sample Application Form*

_____ *Ten Most-Wanted Skills*

_____ *Education Pays . . .*

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Occupational Wage Data Report: 2004*

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[‡] Access VELMA: velma.virtualmi.com.

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How to Follow Up to Get That Special Job Interview



Finding and applying for the right job is only half the battle.

You may have spent weeks perfecting the cover letter and finding just the right résumé style for your needs and wants. Once the résumé and cover letter have been sent, it is time to play the waiting game. You may sit home for hours, days, or even weeks before hearing word. Or you may never hear back. So what is the next step in getting a job interview?

The follow up. Many jobseekers are tempted to just sit back and wait for a call, but the best thing to do is follow up yourself. That way, you show the recruiter that you are really interested in the position and have what it takes to get the job done.

So how long do you wait before following up? Most recruiters agree, at least a week. That way they have plenty of time to review your résumé, and get things in order. While it may be easy to call the next day, chances are your résumé is still sitting in their inbox waiting for review. So give the recruiter at least a week or two before following up. Then feel free to ask when a good time is to meet for a job interview.

When calling to ask for a job interview, keep it simple. Rehearse what you want to say beforehand, and make sure that you are free from noise and distraction. Introduce yourself and remind the recruiter about your résumé. State the job that you are interested in, and ask when would be a good time to set up a job interview.

If you get a recorded message, you may leave

People Are Asking...

How do I prep for the SOLs?

If you're a student at a public school in Virginia—or the parent of one—there's a good chance you've heard something about the state's Standards of Learning tests.

You'll have to pass at least six of the end-of-course tests to earn a standard diploma.

Want to improve your chances? Forget pulling an all-nighter.



Get a good night's sleep instead. If you're supposed to wear glasses, do.

Here are a few other tips from the U.S. Department of Education's website and other online resources:

- Many students will take their tests on a computer, but if you're using paper, be ready with No. 2 pencils and a good eraser.
- Wear comfortable clothes. Consider dressing in layers in case the room is too cold or hot.
- Eat a good breakfast.
- Once the test has begun, read the directions carefully.
- Answer the questions you know. Skip the ones you don't know. You can try them again later.
- Work at your own pace. No one gets a prize for finishing first.

Source: Lindsay Kastner, Richmond Times-Dispatch

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Virginia Employment Commission

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a message or simply call back later. But only leave one or two messages—because the last thing you want to do is irritate the job recruiter.

If you don't feel comfortable following up by phone for a job interview, try sending them a short e-mail. Not only will it give you the opportunity to ask for a job interview, but you can also send along your résumé again without seeming too needy.

Here are some tips to landing that job interview in a follow up e-mail.

- Put your full name and the title of the position you've applied for in the subject line.
- Write a professional note that reiterates your qualifications and interest in the job.
- Attached your résumé again. (Don't make the recruiter have to dig through old e-mails to look for it.)
- Include your full name in the file name of your résumé.
- Don't forget to proofread carefully before you hit "Send!"

Last but not least, resist the urge to just resend your résumé with no follow-up call or e-mail. This tactic could actually backfire and end up ruining your chances of landing a job interview. The recruiter may find another copy of your résumé on file and think that you may not even realize that you applied for the same job twice. So just don't do it.

Source: David Green, PowerfulJobSearchTips.com